

amendment to the Constitution of the United States. I, for some years, along with my colleagues in a bipartisan way, have spoke to this issue. Today, in a new year and in a new Congress, Americans are eager to see a new direction for our country. They have seen Federal spending increase by \$200 billion from fiscal years 2005 to 2006. They have watched the Federal deficit swell into hundreds of billions of dollars, and they have borne the costs. Our spending system is broken and, in my opinion, so is our Tax Code.

The new year is a time for new solutions to this problem. When new solutions that draw upon old principles of limited government and fiscal responsibility and tax simplicity and fairness are how you approach a problem, I think Americans once again will listen, and they will allow us to build a system that increasingly builds faith, once again, with the American people and America's taxpayers. It is simply getting back to basics. We must look at the big picture of Federal spending as a crisis in our country and begin to speak the language that is fundamental to reform in itself, not instead of half measures or bits or pieces or nibbling around the edges. But as both of our leaders have spoken in the last hour to bipartisan efforts, they speak of bold strokes to solving problems for America, and I think that is what Americans expect of us as their leaders. We must look at it simply and reduce the deficit—I would hope we could eliminate it—and to do so with a Tax Code that is fairer, more balanced, certainly simpler, and not so complex that the American taxpayers collectively have to spend billions of dollars a year simply in complying with the Tax Code itself.

In the coming months, I will address all three components of the Federal spending crisis, including a flat tax and a budget process that reforms what we get done here, and that we get it done in a timely manner. I begin with a balanced budget amendment to the United States Constitution. For many Americans, one of the signs of our deep respect for the Constitution is to acknowledge that, in exceptional cases, a problem finally rises to a level that it can only be addressed through a constitutional adjustment in our government.

I believe spending is at that crisis level and we here, Democrat and Republican, have demonstrated our inability to deal with it in a timely and responsible fashion. So it is time we act. My balanced budget amendment would require Congress to pass a balanced budget every year to ensure that Social Security surpluses are set aside exclusively to meet the future needs of beneficiaries and to require a supermajority in both the House and the Senate to raise the Nation's debt limit. In addition, it recognizes that national security is a priority of this Congress by providing essential exceptions for war and imminent military threats. In

other words, over the last several years a balanced budget amendment would not have deterred us from funding, as appropriate and necessary, our engagement in Iraq and to make sure the men and women who are there on the front lines today are adequately provided with the necessary tools.

Thomas Jefferson said it so well, and he said this:

...with respect to future debt, would it not be wise and just for that nation to declare in the constitution they are forming that neither the legislature, nor the nation itself can validly contract more debt than they may pay?

His logic is simple. His logic is right. I urge you to join me in making fiscal responsibility constitutionally acceptable—and a habit—of this Nation's Capitol.

With the first piece of legislation I introduce to the 110th Congress, I call on the Senate to pass a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution, a bill of economic rights for our future and our children.

I ask unanimous consent that a copy of this joint resolution proposing a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution be printed in the RECORD.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the joint resolution be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the joint resolution was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S.J. RES. 1

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the following article is proposed as an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which shall be valid to all intents and purposes as part of the Constitution when ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States within seven years after the date of its submission by the Congress:

"ARTICLE—

"SECTION 1. Total outlays for any fiscal year shall not exceed total receipts for that fiscal year, unless three-fifths of the whole number of each House of Congress shall provide by law for a specific excess of outlays over receipts by a rollcall vote.

"SECTION 2. Total receipts shall include all receipts of the United States Government except those derived from borrowing. Total outlays shall include all outlays of the United States Government except for those for repayment of debt principal.

"SECTION 3. Any surplus of receipts (including attributable interest) over outlays of the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance and the Federal Disability Insurance Trust Funds shall not be counted for purposes of this article. Any deficit of receipts (including attributable interest) relative to outlays of the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance and the Federal Disability Insurance Trust Funds shall be counted for purposes of this article, and must be completely offset by a surplus of all other receipts over all other outlays.

"SECTION 4. The limit on the debt of the United States held by the public shall not be increased, unless three-fifths of the whole number of each House shall provide by law for such an increase by a rollcall vote.

"SECTION 5. Prior to each fiscal year, the President shall transmit to the Congress a

proposed budget for the United States Government for that fiscal year, in which total outlays do not exceed total receipts.

"SECTION 6. No bill to increase revenue shall become law unless approved by a majority of the whole number of each House by a rollcall vote.

"SECTION 7. The Congress may waive the provisions of this article for any fiscal year in which a declaration of war is in effect. The provisions of this article may be waived for any fiscal year in which the United States is engaged in military conflict which causes an imminent and serious military threat to national security and is so declared by a joint resolution, adopted by a majority of the whole number of each House, which becomes law.

"SECTION 8. The Congress shall enforce and implement this article by appropriate legislation, which may rely on estimates of outlays and receipts.

"SECTION 9. This article shall take effect the second fiscal year beginning after its ratification."

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 1—INFORMING THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES THAT A QUORUM OF EACH HOUSE IS ASSEMBLED

Mr. REID (for himself and Mr. MCCONNELL) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 1

Resolved, That a committee consisting of two Senators be appointed to join such committee as may be appointed by the House of Representatives to wait upon the President of the United States and inform him that a quorum of each House is assembled and that the Congress is ready to receive any communication he may be pleased to make.

SENATE RESOLUTION 2—INFORMING THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES THAT A QUORUM OF THE SENATE IS ASSEMBLED

Mr. REID (for himself and Mr. MCCONNELL) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 2

Resolved, That the Secretary inform the House of Representatives that a quorum of the Senate is assembled, and that the Senate is ready to proceed to business.

SENATE RESOLUTION 3—TO ELECT ROBERT C. BYRD, A SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA, TO BE PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE OF THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. REID (for himself and Mr. MCCONNELL) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 3

Resolved, That Robert C. Byrd, a Senator from the State of West Virginia, be, and he is hereby, elected President of the Senate pro tempore.